



City Councilmember
Carl DeMaio

News Release

The "Plenty of Waste Left To Cut" Series

Why Do Firefighters Receive an 8.5% Bonus for Meeting Basic Standards Required for Hiring?

\$5.4 Million in "Specialty Pays" For Basic Qualifications Call Into Question Recent Threats of "Fire Cuts"

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Wednesday, October 13, 2010

CONTACT: Jeff Powell, 619-236-6655

SAN DIEGO – City Councilmember Carl DeMaio today revealed a questionable and costly practice of paying City firefighters an 8.5% bonus each year for simply meeting the requirements of basic employment with the City's fire department.

The current labor contract with the City's fire union states: "effective June 30, 2005 the EMT premium will be increased to 8.5% [of base pay]." (Page 62-63 of hard copy, Page 58 of electronic version.)

One would think that such a certification was unique or above the base requirements of employment as a City firefighter – and therefore worthy of bonus pay. Quite the contrary: City firefighters are already required to hold and maintain their EMT Certification as a basic requirement of their job with the Fire Department.

DeMaio's office verified that EMT certification is required of all Fire Recruits wishing to become firefighters with the City. The City's website also notes the basic requirement for both recruits and Firefighters (see attached screenshots).

"City leaders pushing tax increases claim that all the fat has been cut from the budget, but this automatic bonus pay calls that claim into question," commented DeMaio. "By reforming this practice, we can save millions of dollars each year to avoid cuts in public safety services."

City Waste By The Numbers...

\$5.4 Million

The budgeted cost of the 8.5% bonus given to firefighters holding an EMT certification

75%

The percentage of fire cuts recently proposed by Mayor's office that would be covered by simply eliminating this bonus pay.

100%

The percentage of firefighter applicants that must submit proof of their EMT certification. This basic requirement for the job qualifies them for "specialty" pay.

About this Series: Some city politicians say there is no waste left to cut in the budget. Councilmember DeMaio is identifying wasteful and unnecessary spending in the City's budget to balance the budget while preserving core city services like police and fire – and *without* tax increases.